

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

Statistical Bulletin

Quarter 1 2017/18

(April to June 2017)



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Note:

All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change.

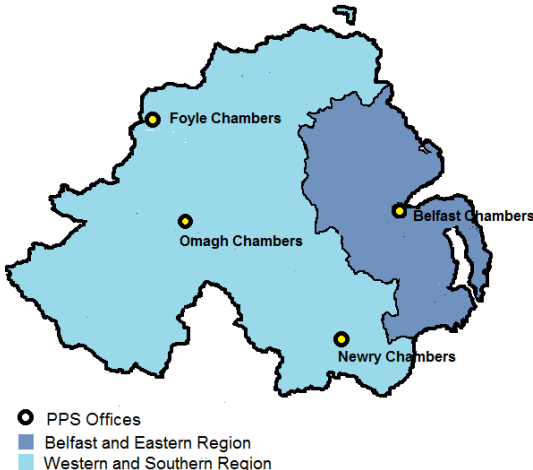
Introduction

The Public Prosecution Service

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS), which is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions, is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police, it also considers cases investigated by other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs.

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not to prosecute and to have responsibility for the conduct of criminal proceedings. A range of options is also available for dealing with offenders other than through prosecution. These options include restorative cautioning, informed warnings and youth conferencing. Prosecutors may also refer offenders to the National Driver Alertness Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme.

PPS Regional Structure



A revised organisational structure was introduced in January 2016 as a result of the PPS Transformation Programme. This included the implementation of a two region model, reducing from the four regions in place previously. Each of the regions, Belfast and Eastern Region and Western and Southern Region, is headed by an Assistant Director (AD). The AD is responsible for working with the courts and the police to provide a high quality prosecution service in their area. The regions deal with a wide range of cases, from the less serious summary cases, which are heard in the Magistrates’ Courts, through to more serious indictable cases which are heard in the Crown Court.

A new Serious Crime Unit (SCU) was also implemented in January 2016. The SCU, which is headed by an AD, deals with a range of the most serious offences including murder, manslaughter, rape and serious sexual offences, human trafficking, prostitution and related offences. Prior to January, cases of this type would typically have been dealt with by the regions.

In addition there are three legal sections, based in PPS Headquarters, which are also headed at AD level. These are as follows:

- Central Casework Section which deals with some of the most high profile and difficult cases in Northern Ireland, including files relating to terrorism and organised crime;
- Fraud and Departmental Section which deals with serious and complex fraud files submitted by the police, as well as files from public bodies; and
- High Court and International Section which deals with a range of specialist legal matters (for example, High Court bail applications, extradition and appeals to the Court of Appeal).

About this Bulletin

This bulletin presents key statistics on the activity of the PPS, including caseloads and prosecutorial decisions. It also includes data on the outcomes of prosecutions at court. The report provides information for the first three months of the 2017/18 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017) and includes comparisons for the equivalent period in 2016/17. Where appropriate detailed notes have been provided, which give an explanation of the relevant PPS processes and procedures.

All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change. For further details, see 'User Information' on page 21.

If you have any feedback, questions or requests for further information about this bulletin, please contact us as follows:

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Summary of Key Points

Figures quoted are for the current quarter, 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes provided (see pages 18 - 21).

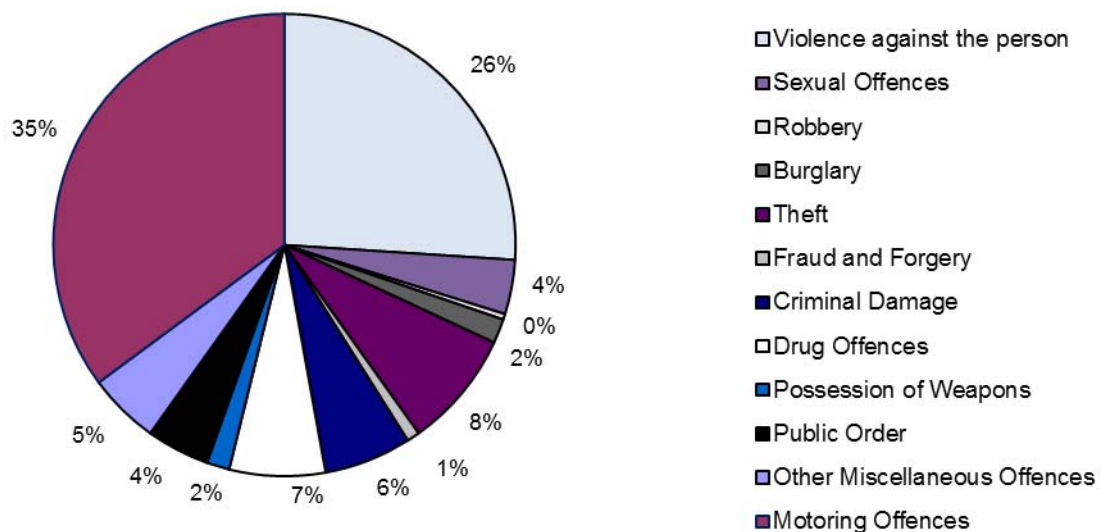
Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 1a)

- The PPS received 10,458 files during the first quarter of 2017/18. This was a decrease of 4.3% on the first quarter of 2016/17(10,931).
- Just over half (51%) of all files received during the current period related to summary offences, 44% to hybrid offences and 5% to indictable offences.

Files Received from Police¹ by Offence Classification (Table 1b)

- During the first quarter of this financial year, PPS received a total of 10,167 files from police. This represents a 4.6% decrease on the previous financial year (10,653).
- In terms of files received by offence classification, over two-thirds fell into three categories; 'motoring' (35%), 'violence against the person' (26%) and 'theft' (8%).
- Four offence classifications have shown an increase in the number of files received compared with the corresponding quarter of 2016/17. These are 'motoring offences' (+281), 'sexual offences' (+118), 'possession of weapons' (+22) and 'fraud and forgery' (+10). The largest reductions occurred in 'violence against the person' (-426), 'theft' (-135), 'drug offences' (-118) and 'criminal damage' (-94).

**Files Received from Police by Offence Classification
Quarter 1 2017/18**



¹ 'Police' includes the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast/Londonderry Harbour Police and British Transport Police.

Files Submitted to PPS Departmental Section by Source Department / Agency (Table 1c)

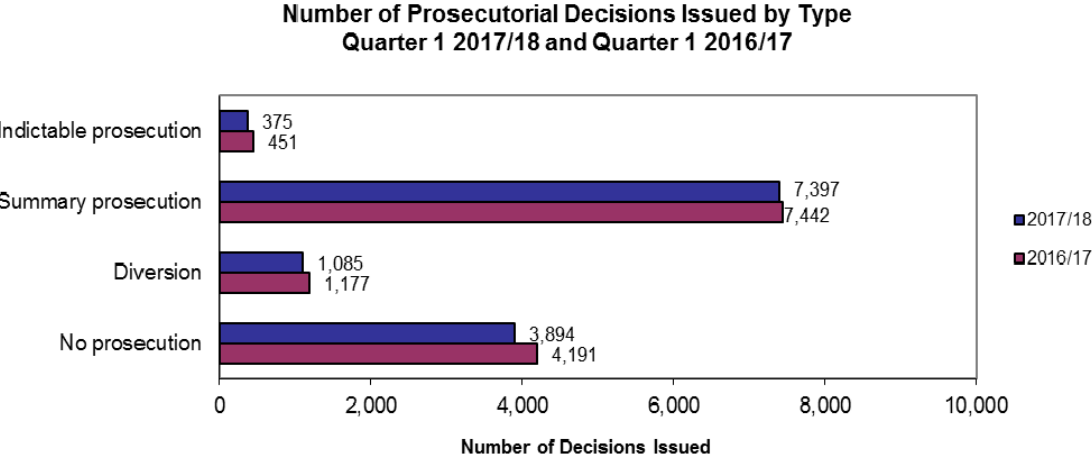
- A total of 261 files were submitted to PPS Departmental Section by departments and agencies during the first quarter of 2017/18, representing a 9.7% increase on 2016/17 (238).
- During the current period, the majority of files were submitted either by the Department for Communities (62%) or the Driver and Vehicle Agency (26%).

Information Requests Submitted to Police by Request Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 2)

- A total of 6,811 information requests were submitted to police during the current quarter, an increase of 1.4% on the previous financial year (6,716).
- Fifty-seven percent of all requests submitted during the current period were 'Post Decision Information Requests', 29% were 'Decision Information Requests' and 13% were 'Full File Requests'.

Prosecutorial Decisions Issued by Decision Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 3a)

- During the current quarter, 12,751 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS, a decline of 3.8% on the first quarter of the previous financial year (13,261).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during the current period. Of the 12,751 decisions issued, more than two-thirds (69%) were for prosecution (7,772) or for diversion from the courts (1,085). This was similar to the first quarter of 2016/17 (68%).



- Comparing the first quarter of 2016/17 and 2017/18, there was a 1.5% decrease in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of a 16.9% decrease in indictable prosecution decisions and 0.6% decrease in summary prosecution decisions. The number of diversionary decisions fell by 7.8% while no prosecution decisions fell by 7.1%.

Prosecutorial Decisions Issued – Reasons for No Prosecution by PPS Region / Function (Table 3b)

- Of the 3,894 no prosecution decisions issued during the first quarter of 2017/18, the vast majority (96%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 4% did not pass the public interest test.

Average Days Required ² for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type – PPS Regions (Table 3c)

- The average number of calendar days required for the issue of an indictable prosecution decision during the current period was 180, compared with 190 days during the equivalent period in 2016/17.
- During the current quarter, summary prosecution decisions required an average of 27 days, five days more (22) than the first quarter of 2016/17.
- The time taken for diversionary decisions varied according to the type of diversion issued. Cautions required an average of 28 days (19 days in first quarter of 2016/17), informed warnings 20 days (8 days in first quarter of 2016/17) and youth conferences 14 days (17 days in first quarter of 2016/17).

Summonses Issued in Police Cases by Service Method and PPS Region (Table 4)

- A total of 7,570 summonses were issued in police cases during the current period, an increase of 6.0% on the same period in 2016/17 (7,139). Comparing the first quarter of 2016/17 and 2017/18, the number of summonses issued via postal service decreased by 1.6% while those issued via personal service increased by 24.7%.
- Two-thirds (66%) of summonses issued during the current period were served on the defendant by post and the remainder (34%) via personal service by police.

Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court by Outcome and PPS Region / Function (Table 5a)

- During the first quarter of 2017/18, 447 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was a decrease of 43.8% on the corresponding quarter of 2016/17.
- Of these defendants, 87.2% were convicted and the remainder were acquitted or had an 'other' outcome.
- Comparing the first quarter of 2016/17 and 2017/18, the conviction rate decreased from 88.6% to 87.2%.

² The average figures are based on calendar days and include the time taken for the police to respond to PPS decision information requests. For indictable prosecution decisions, PPS case preparation time is also included (see explanatory notes, page 19).

Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome and PPS Region / Function (Table 5b)

- A total of 7,482 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the current period, an increase of 3.6% on the same period of 2016/17 (7,220).
- Of the defendants dealt with during the current period, 79.0% were convicted, 6.7% were acquitted and 14.4% had an 'other' outcome.
- The conviction rate represented an increase on the first quarter of 2016/17 (78.3%)

**Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome
Quarter 1 2017/18**

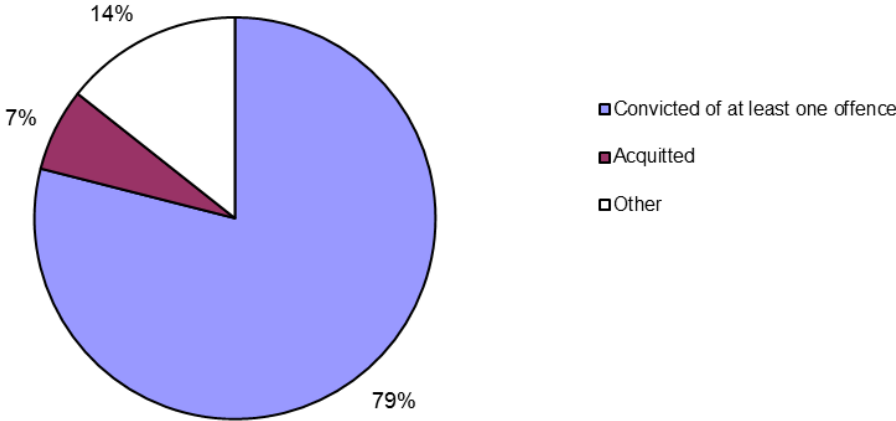


Table 1a: Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of files
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	File Type ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2017/18	Indictable	160	148	174	2	484	
	Hybrid	2,411	1,780	203	184	4,578	
	Summary	2,802	2,510	0	84	5,396	
	All Files	5,373	4,438	377	270	10,458	
Q1 2016/17	Indictable	203	199	127	2	531	
	Hybrid	2,674	2,162	138	128	5,102	
	Summary	2,737	2,447	2	112	5,298	
	All Files	5,614	4,808	267	242	10,931	
% Change (Files Received) 2016/17 to 2017/18		-4.3%	-7.7%	41.2%	11.6%	-4.3%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 18.

Table 1b: Files Received from Police by Offence Classification

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

Offence Classification ²	Number of files					
	Q1 2017/18		Q1 2016/17		Change (2016/17 to 2017/18)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Violence against the person	2,648	26.0%	3,074	28.9%	-426	-13.9%
Sexual offences	385	3.8%	267	2.5%	118	44.2%
Robbery	37	0.4%	51	0.5%	-14	-27.5%
Burglary	168	1.7%	180	1.7%	-12	-6.7%
Theft	835	8.2%	970	9.1%	-135	-13.9%
Fraud and forgery	96	0.9%	86	0.8%	10	11.6%
Criminal damage	617	6.1%	711	6.7%	-94	-13.2%
Drug offences	686	6.7%	804	7.5%	-118	-14.7%
Possession of weapons	165	1.6%	143	1.3%	22	15.4%
Public order	451	4.4%	505	4.7%	-54	-10.7%
Other Miscellaneous offences	511	5.0%	575	5.4%	-64	-11.1%
Motoring offences	3,568	35.1%	3,287	30.9%	281	8.5%
All Files	10,167		10,653		-486	-4.6%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² See explanatory notes, page 18.

Table 1c: Files Submitted to PPS Departmental Section by Source Department / Agency

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

Department / Agency	Number of files					
	Q1 2017/18		Q1 2016/17		Change (2016/17 to 2017/18)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Department for Communities	162	62.1%	100	42.0%	62	62.0%
Driver and Vehicle Agency	68	26.1%	72	30.3%	-4	-5.6%
NI Environment Agency	5	1.9%	12	5.0%	-7	-58.3%
Child Maintenance Service	6	2.3%	26	10.9%	-20	-77.0%
HM Revenue and Customs	3	1.1%	10	4.2%	-7	-70.0%
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ²	6	2.3%	5	2.1%	1	20.0%
Department for the Economy	1	0.4%	2	0.8%	-1	-50.0%
Health and Safety Executive	2	0.8%	1	0.4%	1	100.0%
Other	8	3.1%	10	4.2%	-2	-20.0%
All Departments / Agencies	261		238		23	9.7%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² Figures for NI Environment Agency are presented separately.

Table 2: Information Requests Submitted to Police by Request Type and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of requests
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	Request Type ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2017/18	Full File Request	400	424	62	2	888	
	Decision Information Request	783	1,048	139	26	1,996	
	Post Decision Information Request	1,970	1,783	144	15	3,912	
	No Decision	2	10	3	0	15	
	All Requests Submitted	3,155	3,265	348	43	6,811	
Q1 2016/17	Full File Request	382	505	36	0	923	
	Decision Information Request	915	937	142	12	2,006	
	Post Decision Information Request	2,107	1,528	108	31	3,774	
	No Decision	1	12	0	0	13	
	All Requests Submitted	3,405	2,982	286	43	6,716	
% Change (Requests Submitted) 2016/17 to 2017/18		-7.3%	9.5%	21.7%	0.0%	1.4%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 18.

Table 3a: Prosecutorial Decisions Issued by Decision Type and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

			Number of persons (decisions issued)				
			PPS Region / Function ²				
			Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Type of Decision ³		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2017/18	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	169	115	53	38	375
		Summary prosecution	4,176	2,912	26	283	7,397
	Diversion	Caution	329	286	5	1	621
		Informed warning	31	66	1	0	98
		Youth conference	103	72	1	0	176
		Other	69	121	0	0	190
	No Prosecution		1,931	1,616	293	54	3,894
All Decisions Issued			6,808	5,188	379	376	12,751
Q1 2016/17	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	209	162	41	39	451
		Summary prosecution	3,996	3,183	31	232	7,442
	Diversion	Caution	393	406	7	1	807
		Informed warning	47	54	0	0	101
		Youth conference	107	69	1	0	177
		Other	20	72	0	0	92
	No Prosecution		2,021	1,948	139	83	4,191
All Decisions Issued			6,793	5,894	219	355	13,261
% Change (Decisions Issued) 2016/17 to 2017/18			0.2%	-12.0%	73.1%	5.9%	-3.8%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 19.

Table 3b: Prosecutorial Decisions Issued - Reasons for No Prosecution by PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

		Number of persons (decisions issued)				
		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Reason for no prosecution ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2017/18	Did not pass the evidential test	1,816	1,591	286	52	3,745
	Did not pass the public interest test	115	25	7	2	149
	All no prosecution decisions	1,931	1,616	293	54	3,894
Q1 2016/17	Did not pass the evidential test	1,941	1,914	135	77	4,067
	Did not pass the public interest test	80	34	4	6	124
	All no prosecution decisions	2,021	1,948	139	83	4,191
% Change (No prosecution decisions issued) 2016/17 to 2017/18		-4.5%	-17.0%	110.8%	-35.0%	-7.1%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 19.

Table 3c: Average Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type (PPS Regions)

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

			Average (calendar) days
Quarters	Type of Decision ²		All Regions
Q1 2017/18	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	180
		Summary prosecution	27
	Diversion	Caution	28
		Informed warning	20
		Youth conference	14
		Other	40
	No Prosecution		54
Q1 2016/17	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	190
		Summary prosecution	22
	Diversion	Caution	19
		Informed warning	8
		Youth conference	17
		Other	31
	No Prosecution		45

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² Average days includes time taken for police to respond to decision information requests (see explanatory notes, page 19).

Table 4: Summonses Issued in Police Cases by Service Method and PPS Region

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

		PPS Region				Number of summonses
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	All Regions	
Quarters	Service Method ²	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2017/18	Postal Service	2,906	2,065	13	4,984	
	Personal Service	1,414	1,151	21	2,586	
	All Summonses	4,320	3,216	34	7,570	
Q1 2016/17	Postal Service	2,906	2,148	11	5,065	
	Personal Service	1,244	812	18	2,074	
	All Summonses	4,150	2,960	29	7,139	
% Change (Summonses Issued) 2016/17 to 2017/18		4.1%	8.6%	17.2%	6.0%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² See explanatory notes, page 20.

Table 5a: Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court by Outcome and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of persons (defendants)
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	Outcome ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2017/18	Convicted of at least one offence	198	124	32	36	390	
	Acquitted	29	8	15	4	56	
	Other	0	0	0	1	1	
	All defendants	227	132	47	41	447	
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	87.2%	93.9%	68.1%	87.8%	87.2%	
Q1 2016/17	Convicted of at least one offence	344	299	6	55	704	
	Acquitted	40	47	1	3	91	
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	
	All defendants	384	346	7	58	795	
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	89.6%	86.4%	85.7%	94.8%	88.6%	
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2016/17 to 2017/18 ⁴		-40.9%	-61.8%	571.4%	-29.3%	-43.8%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 20.

⁴ In May 2015 the Law Society and the Bar Council for Northern Ireland withdrew criminal defence services in response to the new Crown Court legal aid fee scheme introduced by the Department of Justice. As a result, no new cases were conducted in the Crown Court over the period May 2015 to February 2016. Much of this work was therefore carried forward into the 2016/17 financial year.

Table 5b: Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2016/17 and Quarter 1 2017/18 ¹

		Number of persons (defendants)				
		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarter	Outcome ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2017/18	Convicted of at least one offence	3,205	2,520	15	169	5,909
	Acquitted	310	185	2	2	499
	Other	623	410	10	31	1,074
	All defendants	4,138	3,115	27	202	7,482
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	77.5%	80.9%	55.6%	83.7%	79.0%
Q1 2016/17	Convicted of at least one offence	2,817	2,638	11	185	5,651
	Acquitted	263	167	2	11	443
	Other	638	447	9	32	1,126
	All defendants	3,718	3,252	22	228	7,220
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	75.8%	81.1%	50.0%	81.1%	78.3%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2016/17 to 2017/18		11.3%	-4.2%	22.7%	-11.4%	3.6%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 20.

Explanatory Notes

Table 1a

A file may refer to one or more individuals. 'File type' is based on the 'primary' offence (generally the most serious offence in terms of the potential penalties in law) in each case at the time the file is submitted to PPS. In general, *summary offences* relate to less serious criminal behaviour and are tried in the Magistrates' Court before a District Judge. *Indictable offences* relate to more serious criminal behaviour and are tried at the Crown Court before a judge, and in most cases, a jury. There are a number of *hybrid offences* which may be tried at either the Magistrates' or Crown Court, for example: theft; assault occasioning actual bodily harm, etc. For these offences, on taking a decision to prosecute, the Public Prosecutor must also decide whether the defendant should be tried in the Magistrates' Court or the Crown Court. In making this decision the prosecutor will consider whether the Magistrates' Court is the appropriate venue in that it has sufficient sentencing powers in relation to the gravity of the offence. For a range of offences, the defendant may also elect for trial in the Crown Court.

The figures include all files submitted by police (Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast / Londonderry Harbour Police and British Transport Police), the Office of the Police Ombudsman and a range of statutory authorities, for example the Driver and Vehicle Agency and HM Revenue and Customs. It should be noted that files submitted by the Office of the Police Ombudsman may be considered by prosecutors in the regional offices or Headquarters.

Table 1b

The Offence Classifications used are standardised across the criminal justice organisations in Northern Ireland. While current classifications continue to mirror the Home Office Recorded Crime Offence Categories, there may be some variation in the offences included within each category. Therefore, data published on Recorded Crime Offence Groups prior to 2014/15 will not be directly comparable with the Offence Classifications.

Files have been assigned to the respective categories on the basis of the 'primary' offence (see above) in each case at the time the file is submitted to PPS from police.

'Police' includes the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast / Londonderry Harbour Police and British Transport Police. Files received by the PPS Regions / Headquarters from the Office of the Police Ombudsman are excluded.

Table 2

The various types of request are defined as follows:

- *Full file requests* are designed to allow the PPS to ask the PSNI for a full file as defined in the relevant protocols.
- A *decision information request (DIR)* is issued by PPS to police where the evidence and information contained in an investigation file is incomplete and a further written report or action is required before a prosecutorial decision can be taken.
- *Post decision information requests* are designed to allow the PPS to ask the PSNI to gather additional evidential material or provide other information required at some further stage in the prosecution process (e.g. for trial).
- Finally a '*no decision*' *decision information request* may issue when, on the evidence submitted by police in an investigation file, it is not possible to take a prosecution decision and

it is not reasonable to issue a detailed DIR having regard to the number or type of deficiencies in the file.

Table 3a

More than one prosecutorial decision may be recorded against any individual within a case. Therefore 'type of decision' refers to the most serious decision issued, in the following order: Indictable prosecution; summary prosecution; diversion; and no prosecution. A number of types of prosecutorial decision are available to the prosecutor, as follows:

- *Indictable prosecution* applies in the more serious offences which may be heard in the Crown Court.
- *Summary prosecution* applies to cases which may be heard in the Magistrates' Courts.
- A *caution* is a formal reprimand administered by the police. Whilst it is not a conviction it is recorded on a person's criminal record.
- An *informed warning* is also a formal reprimand administered by police and is recorded on a person's criminal record.
- A *diversionary youth conference* is an alternative to prosecution in court and may be used in cases where the defendant is a youth. This type of restorative conference may involve a number of parties, including the defendant, the victim and police. A youth conference is a formal process, and although not a conviction, is recorded on a person's criminal record.
- '*Other diversionary options* include referrals to the National Driver Alertness Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme.
- It should be noted that diversionary options (with the exception of the National Driver Alertness Scheme) are only available to prosecutors if the defendant admits that he/she has committed the offence and agrees to accept and participate in the diversionary option.
- A *decision for no prosecution* will be taken if the prosecutor decides that in any case being considered there is insufficient evidence or that it is not in the public interest to prosecute (see note regarding the Test for Prosecution below).

Table 3b

Prosecutions are initiated where the prosecutor is satisfied that the Test for Prosecution is met. There are two aspects to the Test:

- a) Whether the evidence which can be offered in court is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction (the evidential test); and
- b) Whether prosecution is required in the public interest (the public interest test).

Each of these stages must be separately considered but a decision whether or not a prosecution is in the public interest can only arise when the evidential test has been satisfied.

Table 3c

As mentioned in note to Table 3a, more than one prosecutorial decision may be recorded against any individual within a case. Therefore these figures are based on the first decision issued. Monitoring covers the period in calendar days from date initial papers (charge cases only) or full file is received by the PPS to the date the prosecutorial decision is issued. This excludes defendants for whom a warrant has been issued but includes any time taken for police to respond to decision information requests (see note to Table 2 above). Average days for indictable prosecution decisions include the time taken for the prosecutor's decision and for case preparation (i.e. where appropriate, ensuring that the case is ready for court). In indictable cases case preparation includes time required for the preparation of committal papers which contain the evidence, such as statements, exhibits etc., to be presented to the

Crown Court. It may also include consideration of duties of disclosure by the prosecutor and applications to be made to the court.

Table 4

Information refers to police cases only. A summons may be served on a defendant either by post, or via a personal summons served by the police. The defendant will be required to attend court on the date stated on the summons. Following the commencement of Rule 2(6) of the Magistrates' Courts (Amendment No. 2) Rules 2009, in early 2010, the large majority of offences can now be dealt with by way of a postal summons. The only exceptions relate to corporate defendants, vulnerable defendants and those defendants who have not responded to a postal summons.

More than one summons may be issued in respect of an individual defendant in a case. For example, if the defendant does not attend court on the day stated on an initial postal summons, this will generally be followed up by a personal summons served by police.

Table 5a

Includes all defendants dealt with in the Crown Court during the period, based on results data supplied by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (via the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism). Proceedings in the Crown Court generally follow the issue of a decision by PPS to prosecute on indictment. The category 'acquitted' includes the following outcomes: acquittals, acquittals by direction, No Bills, no evidence offered – defendant acquitted, left on books, proceedings stayed, unfit to plead – but found that he/she did not do the act, no case to answer - granted. 'Other' Includes defendant deceased, withdrawal – all charges, bound over for not having shown cause, bound over where charge withdrawn, withdrawn due to diversionary route. It should be noted that if an individual is involved in more than one case which is resulted during this period, they will be counted as a separate defendant on each occasion.

Table 5b

Includes all defendants dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the period, based on results data supplied by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (via the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism). Data reflect the number of persons where PPS has taken a decision to prosecute summarily; i.e. defendants against whom charges were withdrawn prior to decision are excluded. The category 'acquitted' includes the following outcomes: dismissed; no case to answer granted; and proceedings stayed. 'Other' includes: defendant deceased; withdrawal – all charges; bound over for not having shown cause; bound over where charge withdrawn; withdrawn due to diversionary route. Excludes persons returned for trial in the Crown Court. It should be noted that if an individual is involved in more than one case which is resulted during this period, they will be counted as a separate defendant on each occasion.

Tables 5a and 5b

Conviction rates are calculated on the basis of the number of persons convicted as a percentage of all persons dealt with during the period.

The Department of Justice publish conviction data on an annual basis; however this may not be directly comparable with data included in this report due to variations in data quality validations and counting rules.

User Information

Data sources and validations

The information presented in this bulletin is derived from the Case Management System (CMS), the main operational system in use within the PPS. This is a 'live' system with data being input on a daily basis.

It should be noted that the CMS is also linked to the CJSNI's Causeway data sharing mechanism. The first phase of Causeway ('DSM 0'), introduced in 2005/06, allowed police to submit files to the PPS electronically. The most recent phase ('DSM 1') was launched at the end of November 2009 and broadened the portfolio of information shared electronically. For example PPS are now supplied with court results by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service which feed into the PPS Case Management System via Causeway.

The information is extracted using Business Objects. It is then validated and quality assured to ensure that the data is reliable and robust for use. Any inconsistencies are reported back to operational staff or to the PPS Information and Communications Technology Branch. If required, any necessary amendments are then made to the data.

All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change.

Rounding conventions

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers or to one decimal place and may not always sum to 100%.

Official Statistics

These are 'Official Statistics' as defined in Section 6 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. Statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are seconded to the PPS and are responsible for ensuring that the statistics produced comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The PPS would value any feedback on this report and welcome recommendations on the future addition of data that may be of interest to readers. Contact details are provided overleaf.

Future publications

The next Statistical Bulletin, covering the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017, will be published on 16th November 2017.

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